WWW

Web sites: from the ground up

What you need to know

Tennessee Agritourism Workshop

What is a Web site?

1. Living Document
   - Always evolving and changing
2. Allows for things to be done in phases
   1. Get a one page up and start your web presence
   2. Add more content & sections to your site
   3. Enhancements
      - Based on customer recommendations
      - Natural evolution of business
        - Add e-commerce
        - Online tour

Why have a site?

1. People are looking for you
   - Important marketing tool
2. People expect you have a professional-looking Web site
   - First chance to make a good impression and be taken seriously
3. Web sites save you money
   - Reduce printing and mailing costs
   - 24/7 salesman

What a Web site can do for you:

1. Informative
   - ☐ Simplest of sites helps customers find you
2. Marketing
   - ☐ For better marketing, create an expansive site
3. E-Commerce
   - ☐ Sell your products to a global market

PART 1:
WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

Goal: Be prepared to create your Web site

Research

1. Spend a few hours or days looking around the Internet at other Web sites.
   - Look at your competitors
   - Find similar business sites

2. Get the juices flowing.
   - Get an idea of things you like and want to use
   - Discover things you don't like or find hard to use

Identity (a brand)

1. Do you already have a logo?

2. What do you think of when you think about your business?

3. Colors, pictures that exemplify your company and what you do

Vision

1. Decide your sites main purpose
   - Why have a site?
   - What do you want to get from it?
   - What do you want to say?
2. Define your budget
   - Should be in long-term, not a one time expense
3. Create a Web plan
   - Developing a Web Plan handout

Content: Overview

1. Collect content
2. Understand audience
3. Write content
4. Must have content
5. Photos
6. SEO terms and why

1. Content: Collect

- Collect content about your company
  - Current brochures, news articles
  - Start thinking about keywords that describe what you do

2. Content: Audience

1. Understand your audience
   - Who are you targeting?

2. How people use the web
   - Scan not read
   - Short attention span
     - Only have a few seconds to impress before they leave and go somewhere else

3. Content: Write

1. Hire someone to write your content
   - You will need to have an idea of what you want to say (based on your vision)

2. Write yourself
   - Writing for web tips

4. Content: Must Haves
Minimum content for all sites

1. Home/Welcome
   - What's on your site?
   - Where to find I what's on your site.
   - A method to contact you.
   - Why they should explore further.
2. About
   - Why do you do what you do?
   - Who are the people behind the company?
   - What kind of people will I be working with/buying from?
   - What does your company stand for?
   - What does your company stand against?
3. Contact
   - Address (& map)
   - Phone number
   - Email address

5. Content: Photos

1. What photos do you want on your site?
   - Stock photos
2. For your subject it would be best to have photos of your business too
   1. Hire a professional. Can be pricey.
   2. Take yourself. Suggest take yourself first and if they don't turn out well, then look into hiring a professional.
      - Top 10 Tips for Great Pictures (handout) http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=317/10032&pq-locale=en_US

6. Content: SEO

- Include SEO terms in your content and why it's important to start early in the development process
  1. What is SEO and why it's important
  2. Identify niche markets and words (keywords) the general public will use to find you
  3. This step should be done early in the development process and then continuously revisited

Domain Name

1. What is a Domain Name

2. Check availability of name
   - Short but descriptive
   - Localize URL
     - Shelby County, Davidson County, Town, City

3. Own, not rent
   - You want to own not rent or lease from someone
   - YOU REGIGISTER your web address
     - Purchase a year vs. many years

Hosting (optional)

1. What is hosting, why important
   - How people see your site
2. Free hosting: you get what you pay for, not for business
3. Why you would not need a hosting package
   - Paying someone to design and host your site
   - Have your own server
4. What to look for in a hosting package
   - Get deals with year hosting package, free domain name for a year or lifetime depending on company
   - Most simple Web sites will be fine with most basic hosting package; e-commerce may need more

PART 2:
DESIGN YOUR SITE

Goal: Understand the different options you have to design a site that will increase your sales and reputation.

What is a Web site?

1. A Web site is a living document, constantly changing and evolving.
2. It's a tool (e.g., research, networking, communication, etc.).
3. Types of sites:
   - Search engines, directories, portals
   - Information al
   - Personal
   - Blogs and diaries
   - Company
   - Forums
   - Online transactions (e.g., shopping, banking, auctions, etc.)
   - Web 2.0 (Flickr, del.iciou.us)
   - Social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube)
   - File sharing (RapidShare, Megaupload)

What makes a good site?

1. Has a clear purpose and achieves it
2. Provides value and creates repeat visitors
3. Look and feel matches the subject matter
4. Predictable and credible sites are taken seriously
5. Accessible & Usable
   - Must be able to easily navigate
   - All devices and users must be able to access

Two paths you can take:

Hire a Professional

- Hiring a professional can produce great results at a cost.
- You are getting expert advise.
- Can you achieve what you want on your own?

Do-It-Yourself (DIY)

- This is a cheaper path but make sure it works for your business plan.
- Fun if you enjoy learning new things.
- Can you deliver a professional site?

Hire a Creative Professional

What to expect and how help them help you

Hire a Professional

When hiring a designer there are two options:

Design Firm	Freelance Designer

Either way you want to make sure you get:

- A one of a kind solution
- A partner to help your brand grow
- Consistency across your branding efforts
- Technical skills to get the job done
- For more information please see "How to Hire a Web Designer" http://www.sitepoint.com/article/how-to-hire-a-web-designer/

Hire a Professional Process

1. Discuss project with vendor
2. They will give you a quote/estimate on the cost of the project
   - Get multiple quotes to find the best deal (repeat 1 & 2 with different vendors)
   - Always get it in writing
3. Sign Contract

Hire Contract

Things it must have:

1. Timeline & checkpoints for review
2. Ownership & use
3. Hosting (who will host the site)
4. Scope of project
5. Edits/numbers of versions
6. Accessible, Section 508 Compliant
7. Valid code (W3C Complaint)

Things to watch out for

1. They own your site even though you paid for it.
2. They don't provide support after launch and you have to pay more.
3. They don't complete everything in the contract.
4. Who gets the working and development files?

Hire: Design & Development

1. Checkpoints, reviews to see progress
   - Never get the day before launching

2. Respond to reviews in a timely fashion

3. Discuss any questions and concerns you have

Hire: Finish-up

A quick summary, explained in more detail at the end of section.

1. ## Test & review
   1. Should have adequate time to review before going live
   2. Shouldn't go live without your approval
   3. Should allow for changes
2. ## Launch
   1. Soft launch: wait a month to ensure there are no problems with your site then…
   2. Hard launch: announce via radio, TV, newspaper, etc.
3. ## Maintenance & monitor
   1. Never done! Living document needs attention to grow.
   2. This could be a new contract or it may be a part of the original contract.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY)

How to create a Web site from the ground up
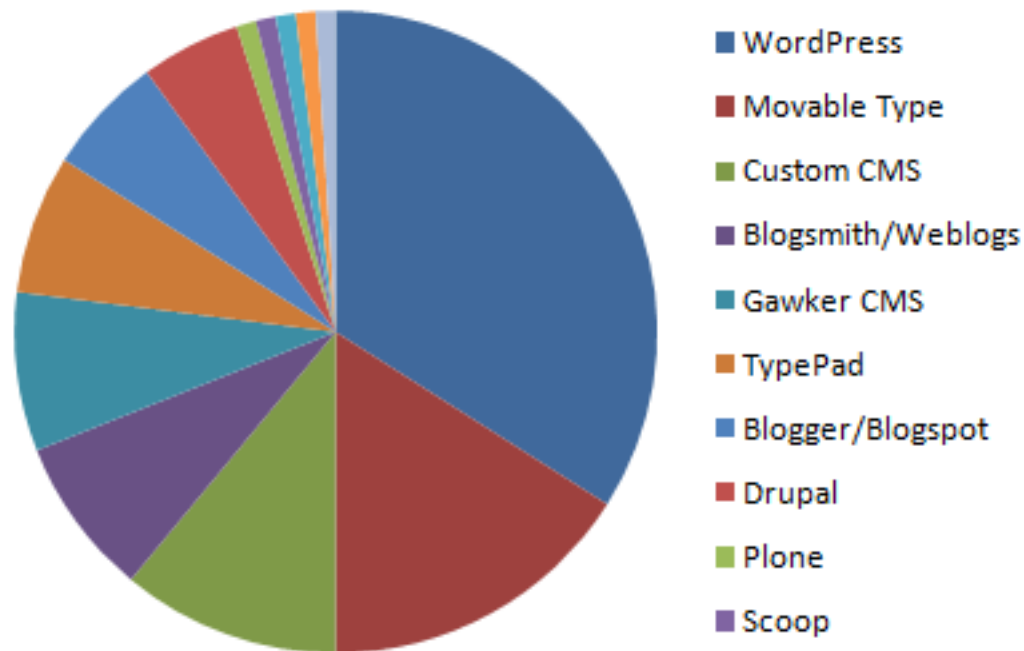
Do-It-Yourself: Getting Started

1. Web Plan
2. HTML & CSS knowledge
3. Editor
4. Browsers
5. Photo editor
6. FTP client

Do-It-Yourself: Develop design

1. Design your site
   - See *DIY Web Starter Kit.pdf*

2. Content Management Systems (CMS)
   - You build from a template site

3. Follow Section 508 Accessibility Guidelines
   - 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications

Popular CMS

CMS Used by Technorati Top 100

- WordPress
- Movable Type
- Custom CMS
- Blogsmith/Weblogs
- Gawker CMS
- TypePad
- Blogger/Blogspot
- Drupal
- Plone
- Scoop

http://www.cmswire.com/cms/micro-cms/results-most-popular-cms-in-technoratis-top-100-002198.php#evt-never

Style sheets: Usable & Accessible

- You design your site so people will see it and style sheets help do this for different users and different devices
  - Style sheet(s)
  - Print Style sheet
  - Mobile Style sheet
- Style sheets separate style and content
- Helps usability because look is consistent and predictable
- Helps accessibility because assistive devices like screen readers are able to see and relay the information

Do-It-Yourself: Accessibility

1. Laws
   - Section 508, [1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications.](#)
   - State Statues
2. What is an accessible Web site?
3. Why it's important (besides the law)
4. Where to learn more
5. Test your site's accessibility
   - Can you tab through your site and not use your mouse to navigate?
   - Tools to test compliance

Do-It-Yourself:
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

1. This should be done early in the development process and then continuously revisited
   - Find new terms and update your site with these words

2. SEO (sites and salesmen) scams
   - No one can promise number one at the top of all/any search engines (unless you pay)
     - it takes time and adjustments (from monitoring your Web stats)

Do-It-Yourself: Understanding SEO

1. Pages are gathered off the Web using a process called spidering.
2. Collected pages are indexed.
3. On a search page the user can enter queries and see a list of pages that are related.
4. Robot Exclusion
5. Optimizing
    1. META Data
    2. Titles and File Names
    3. Relevant Text Content
6. Submit Your Site to Search Engines

Finished building, now TEST

1. Should have adequate time to review site before going live
2. Upload completed site to hosting provider using FTP and test it.
3. Why test?
   - Everybody has a different computer set up so it will never work for everyone. You want to get it to work for as many as possible and testing helps you figure this out.
   - Tools that help with testing
   - Ask friends and family to review and let you know of problems.
4. How to test:
   - Hit every link on every page to find any possible errors.
   - Test in multiple browsers on multiple systems to ensure it will work on most systems.
5. Fix any issues before you launch

Launch Site

1. Go live: point web address to your hosting provider (if you haven't already done so)
   - Can take anywhere from 24 to 72 hours to propagate through the internet
2. Soft launch: wait a month to ensure there are no problems with your new site then…
3. Hard launch: Announce in some way (email, mailer, newspaper, TV, radio, etc.)
4. Sometimes it's beneficial to have a "soft launch" and do more testing before announcing to the entire public
   - e-Commerce

PART 3: MAINTENANCE & MONITORING

After you launch your site

Maintenance Plan

1. Follow schedule and make routine updates
   - Seasonal
   - Bi-annual
   - Daily
   - Monthly
2. Easy & quick to update: photos
3. If you post dates, make sure they are current. You want to be a reputable site and you achieve that by providing accurate content

Monitoring: Web Statistics

1. Use your analytics tool to see if you're achieving your goals
2. Review your stats to know how to improve site
   - Set aside time: once a month to review your stats and make updates based on your findings
3. Free stats
4. Most Web hosts provide stats and are available through the control panel
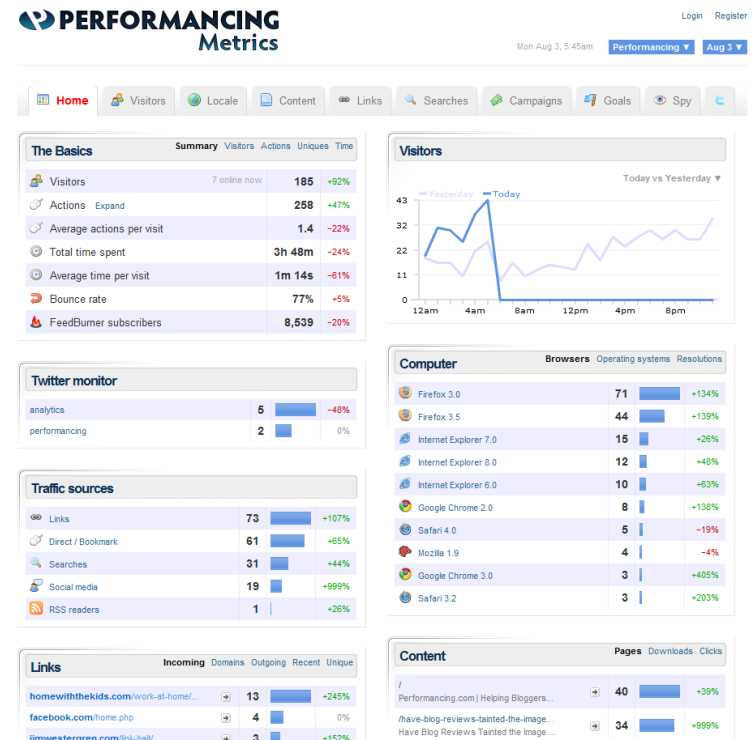   - AWStats is the most preferred stats tool

Free Statistic Programs

Google Analytics

www.google.com/analytics
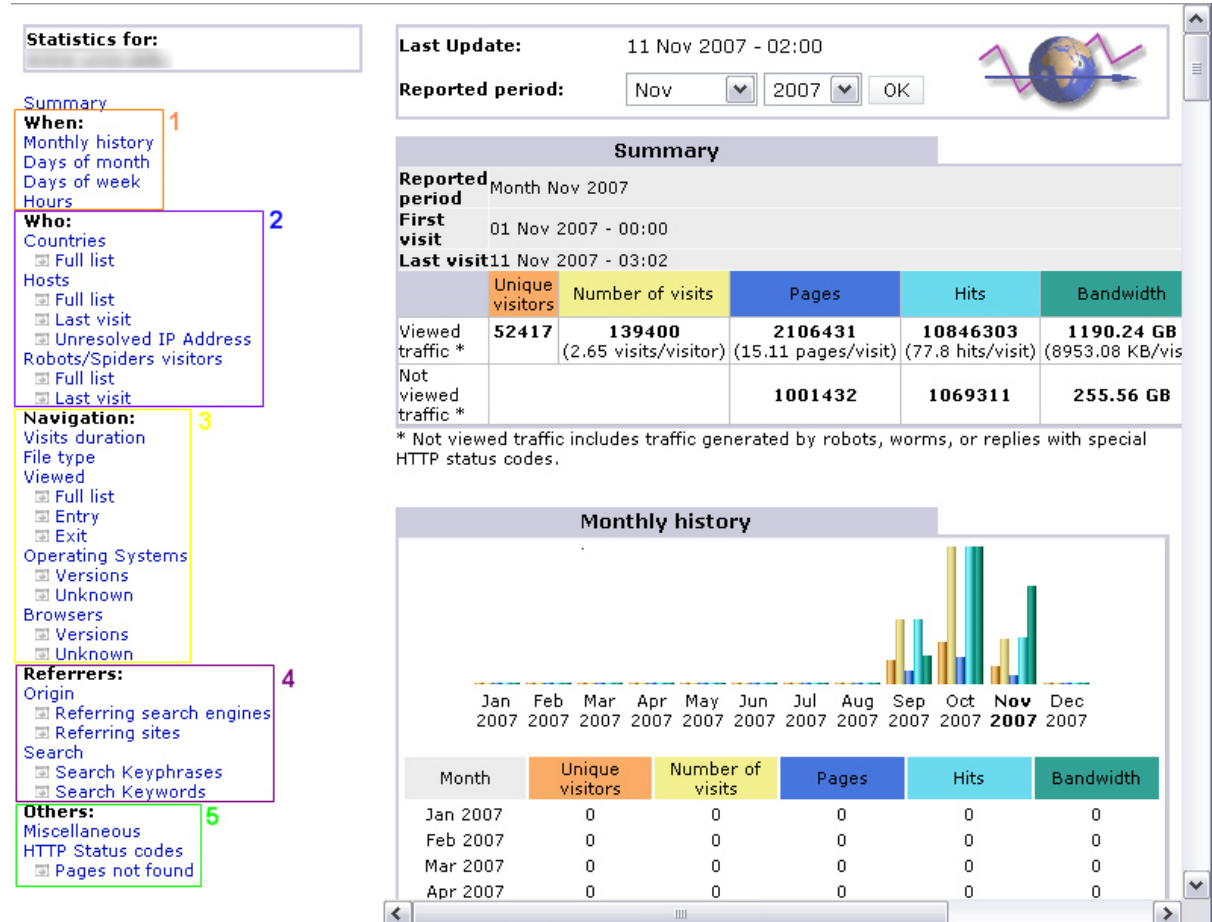
PMetrics

pmetrics.performancing.com

Hosting Control Panel: AWStats

What's Important:

1. When

2. Who

3. Navigation

4. Referrers

5. Others

Understanding Web Statistics

1. There is a big difference between a hit and a visit, and an even bigger difference between a visit and a conversion.
   1. Hit – server request for each item on a Web page
   2. Visit – a person who lands on site, navigates, then leaves
   3. Conversion – number of visitors who complete goal/action
2. Visits can be broken down into parts
   1. Page Views: what's popular
      1. Entry Pages
      2. Exit Pages
   2. Stickiness: time spent on a site
3. Other helpful info:
   1. Navigation: Browsers
   2. Referrers: Keyphrases & Keywords
   3. Others: Pages not found (404 Errors)

Going beyond with Web 2.0 and Social Media

1. How to leverage Web 2.0 and social media
   - Networking: CraigsList, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace (friends link to friends ever growing)
   - Sharing: YouTube, Flickr
   - Blogs

2. Future of Internet: Mobile
   - Expect most will use cell phones and mobile devices to view Web sites

3. How this can help your business